

# Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for each question of the question paper.

## Candidate 4

### Section 2 – Question 14

**Choose a film or television drama in which a sequence presents an important moment in the development of a character or theme.**

**With reference to appropriate techniques, explain how the film or programme makers present this important moment and discuss how this contributes to your appreciation of the text as a whole.**

The candidate was awarded **15 out of 20 marks** for this essay.

The candidate has chosen to write about *2001: A Space Odyssey*, focusing on a sequence which presents an important moment in the development of a theme. The opening sequence is selected as being important for developing themes such as human progress and the dangers of technology.

In terms of knowledge and understanding of the text, the candidate introduces the theme of human progress, showing a clear grasp of this idea. The candidate covers the opening moments of the film in detail, with ‘the black screen’ appearing ‘in the first minutes’ of the film. Reference to the director’s use of music – ‘Also Sprach Zarathustra’ – is clearly linked into the evolution of a ‘superman’ race. The discussion of this music is clearly linked by the candidate to the development of the theme of human progression. The candidate demonstrates a clear understanding of the text by linking the fate of Dave, who transforms into ‘the superior race of the star child’ later in the film. The candidate moves on to discuss how the opening scene introduces the theme of the dangers of technology. Again, clear understanding is demonstrated detailing how the opening scene foreshadows the introduction of HAL and the potential threat of technology to the human race. The candidate clearly links themes by discussing technology and human progress as they detail ‘a leopard on top of a hill looking down on the apes’. The candidate makes clear reference to the leopard viewing the apes as prey, before explaining that (due to human progress) these roles will be reversed later. This is clearly supported by description of Kubrick using a shot of a panther carcass, killed by humans, later in the film. The negative aspect of human progress is further developed as the candidate details apes killing the leader of a tribe with a bone. This is related to violence being part of human nature and something that will get worse as we (and our technologies) continue to evolve.

In terms of analysis and evaluation, the candidate makes detailed analytical comments on the director’s use of a range of filmic techniques such as non-

diegetic sound, establishing shot, close-up and mise-en-scene. For example, the candidate discusses the use of the non-diegetic music in the opening of the film and ties this into the work of Nietzsche. The introduction of HAL is discussed. The candidate details the close-up shot of HAL's red eye and explains how this clearly foreshadows the threat technology is to humans, by linking the redness of HAL's eye to the sunrise, highlighting the beginning of dangerous technology. The establishing shot, of the 'African desert landscape', is referenced to highlight the beginning of the human race, while the use of red and orange colour is discussed, used to 'symbolise the danger that comes from' progress. The candidate also links the use of slow motion, when the apes are using a bone to break other bones, to humanity's predisposition for violence. This demonstrates a detailed analytical stance by emphasising the central place of violence in human progression. The candidate clearly ties the director's cut from the shot of a bone to an 'extreme close up shot' of a nuclear weapon. There is discussion of how these shots represent the development of technology and, regardless of how advanced this technology has become, the idea that humans still use it for primitive and violent purposes.

There is a clear evaluative stance in relation to the text. The candidate maintains a clear focus on the question and explains how the opening sequence of the film introduces a range of key themes and explains how these are developed later in the film. The structure of referencing theme at the end of most of the paragraphs can be a little restricting, but this does not impact on the overall mark.

In summary, this essay demonstrates clear knowledge and understanding. Analysis of filmic techniques is clear, occasionally demonstrating detailed analysis. As a result, this piece is placed at the top of the 15-13 mark range and is awarded 15 marks.